

# Research Guide

Fort Vancouver Archaeological Collection



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# Introduction

For Fort Vancouver, archaeology has special significance. The material culture, both in the site's collection and still *in situ*, is what remains of the original fort site and its inhabitants. Because the physical structures of the fort and surrounding complex were mostly destroyed by 1866, the archaeological artifacts and features are primary resources for reconstructing and interpreting the site. Fort Vancouver's role as supply depot and administrative headquarters is reflected in the enormity of the archaeological potential here. Archaeological excavations have taken place over the last 50 years, creating a vast collection unparalleled at any other Hudson's Bay Company site. The collection also encompasses many artifacts of U.S. Army origin, objects which help the Vancouver National Historic Reserve interpret Vancouver Barracks and early military life in the area. Currently, the site houses approximately 1.5 million artifacts, almost 200,000 of which are in the park's study collection. Collections from three other Park Service sites are also stored here: Fort Colville from Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, Whitman Mission National Historic Site's Fort Nez Percés, and Bellevue Farm from the San Juan National Historical Park. These collections are available for research, but at the present time they have no designated study collection and are still kept in storage boxes. Additionally, the relevant records are not necessarily complete or consistent with Fort Vancouver's cataloging standards. In 1995, the entire collection was moved into the Fur Store building; these facilities not only provide a state-of-the-art storage and climate control system for the collection, but also accommodations for researchers.

This guide was created to promote the accessibility of Fort Vancouver's archaeological collection. Our continual aim is to expand public use of the collection as a research tool, and to supplement the site's interpretive programs. In order to become an interactive research center rather than simply a repository, the curatorial division is increasing outreach and educational opportunities relating to the archaeological collection and records. We hope that such things as on-line access, digital images, temporary exhibits, finding aids, presentations, and "open house" days will increase awareness and appreciation of the collection as a whole. We anticipate that you will find the Fort Vancouver collection intriguing and informative.

## Organizational System

A comprehensive reorganization of the collection, undertaken in the summer of 1999, resulted in a more accessible storage scheme and improved visibility. Simultaneous with an effort to use storage space more generously, we reorganized the collection as a whole, and within each assemblage, so that the layout would be more logical and more easily utilized by public researchers. To this same end, some items were repackaged so that both artifacts and labels could be easily viewed.

Assemblages are arranged chronologically by excavation date. Material types are grouped together, following in general an order of ceramics, glass, lithics, organics, and metal. Within a material type we organized by function or pattern name as appropriate, moving from identified objects to those that remain unidentified, and then numerically by

catalog number. Specific type collections were placed at the beginning of the assemblage from which they were created or from which most of the examples were collected. For safety, extremely heavy objects were placed on the shelves at the beginning of each stack rather than in drawers. In addition, we attempted to separate by period, distinguishing HBC era artifacts from those associated with the U.S. Army.

The few exceptions to these guidelines occurred for several reasons. We had to consider weight distribution both for the safety of those working in the collection storage rooms and for the artifacts, effective use of space within a cabinet, and appropriate viewing heights for type collections within an assemblage. Certain accessions retain their original organizational scheme begun by the archaeologist during the field cataloging process (for example, some Kanaka Village assemblages are arranged by operation number, which is the specific area from which they were excavated). For a more detailed description of the study collection organization, see the **Study Collection Index**.

The majority of non-diagnostic artifacts are housed in storage boxes, arranged numerically on the shelves in the east collection storage room. The lot cataloged artifacts which are less climate-sensitive, a category which includes brick, tile, coal, clinkers, slag, and asphalt, are kept in storage cans in a designated collections storage room in the loft of the Chief Factor's House.

## **Glossary:**

**Accession** – a single object or a group of objects received into a museum collection from one source, under one type of transaction, on one date. Archaeological accessions sometimes incorporate artifacts from several consecutive seasons of excavation, if these were done by one archaeologist in the same area.

**Assemblage** – a group of artifacts related by provenience and date of excavation.

**Diagnostic artifact** – an artifact that informs as to time, cultural affiliation, manufacturing process, function, etc.

**Lot cataloged or non-diagnostic artifacts** – objects alike in provenience, material type, and object name, which are cataloged together rather than individually.

**Provenience** – the source or origin of an artifact; the exact location where an object was found or made. This may include grid coordinates, operation number, stratum, and level.

**Study collection** – a collection of artifacts that are significant for a variety of reasons, including uniqueness, research potential, completeness, exhibit potential, or use as a prototype for reproductions.

**Type collection** – a collection of a single object type that illustrates unique examples, e.g. the Spode Type Collection contains examples of each transferprint pattern type found archaeologically.

# Public Searches on ANCS+

Public Search is a simple search interface for ANCS+, the newest version of the Automated National Catalog System. It allows researchers and non-museum staff to perform searches within our archaeological collection data and related images. The data are presented in a read-only format.

## To access Public Search:

From the Windows desktop, start the program by double-clicking on the *Re:discovery* icon.

At the System Login Security screen, enter your login name and password. For public searches the login name is **GUEST** and the password is **FOVA**. Single-click on **OK**.

At the main menu, single-click on the **Collections Management** icon.

At the Select Collection menu, single-click on the **CR FOVA** collection.

At the Collection menu, single-click on the **Public Searches** option, which is second from the top. A menu of Public Search options will appear. You may search by a specific field name, or use the Word Search function.

## Public Search options:

### *Searching by field*

If you choose to search through a field name, the following options are available to you:

- Catalog Number
- Accession Number
- Manufacture Date
- Classification 1 (divides records into archaeology, history, or ethnology)
- Object Name
- Artist/Maker
- Eminent Figure
- Eminent Organization
- Key Description

To use any of these options, single-click on the field name you wish to search. At the Enter Search Value prompt, type the information you are for which you are searching. If necessary, use the Tab key to move from line to line. To initiate the search, single-click on **OK**.

### *Viewing results of a search by field*

The system will display a list of catalog records that meet your search criteria. If no record matches exactly, it will display the record that most closely matches your criteria.

To view a record, highlight any item on the list and press **Enter**. The Public Search record screen will appear. Only the fields that contain data appear on the screen.

### *Searching by word*

From the Public Search options menu, single-click on **Any Word**. Single-click on **Enter new search**. In the text box in the middle of the screen, type the word and phrase you wish to find. Single-click on **Search** to initiate the search.

### *Viewing results of a word search*

When the search has been completed, press any key to return to the Word Search Options menu.

Choose **List search results** to view a list of records found during the search. This list will only include those records that exactly match your search criteria.

### *Revising a word search*

From the Word Search Options menu, single-click on **Revise Search**. The Word Search screen will appear with your most recent entry in the text box. Edit or the word or phrase, and single-click on **Search** again. You may not revise a search if you have exited the program since you ran the last word search.

### **Exiting Public Search:**

From the Public Search record screen, single-click on **Exit**.

Single-click on **Exit** at bottom of the Public Search options screen

Single-click on **Exit** at the bottom of the Collection menu screen.

Single-click on the **Exit** icon on the main menu.

Single-click on **OK** to exit *Re:discovery* and return to the Windows desktop.

*For more information on Public Search, see Appendix C of the ANCS+ manual or ask a curatorial staff member.*

# Finding Aids for the Collection

## Study Collection Index

This is an inventory of each drawer in the study collection. Since it is a compilation of the individual drawer labels within each cabinet, it describes the category of artifacts rather than the individual objects or catalog numbers. For example, Cabinet 11 Drawer 3 is described as “Glass Bottles – Drug, Cosmetic, Ink, and Unidentified”. This may guide you if you want to see artifacts of a certain class or material type. It also lists the title of each cabinet, e.g. “1971-1975 Excavations, Blacksmith Shop”. This will be useful if you wish to research within a specific excavation.

## Collection Reorganization Report

This report was written in the summer of 1999, when the entire study collection underwent a complete reorganization. This document explains the overall organization rationale for each assemblage, arranged chronologically, and may serve as a general introduction for those who wish to browse. It also notes any exceptions to the collection organization system described in the second section of this guide.

## Accession Index

This is an index of every accession number in the FOVA collection, which lists the catalog numbers assigned to each accession. Accession numbers are labeled according to type (history or archaeology) and status (storage, exhibit, loan, missing, or deaccessioned). It also provides a brief description of the date and location of the archaeological excavation for each accession in the archaeology category.

## Catalog Index

This index provides a cross-reference to the accession index listed above. For each catalog number or inclusive series of catalog numbers, the assigned accession number is listed.

## Authority Tables

These tables provide inclusive lists of the terms used in museum cataloging, for fields in the database that have consistent entries. They also provide definitions for selected terms, designed to differentiate between two related choices. For example, the Object Name Authority Table defines the correct usage of CORDAGE versus ROPE. The available fields include: Object Name, Artist/Maker, Cultural Identity, Material Type, Cataloger, City/County/State/Country of Origin, Historical or Cultural Period, and Key Description. These tables may aid you in formulating word searches within the public search function of ANCS+.

# Highlights of the Collection

This “highlights” guide is for those who would like an introductory look at the collection, rather than focusing on in-depth research. The staff of the curatorial division has compiled this list of objects that represent the breadth of the collection here, as well as present some of the most significant artifacts. They are arranged into categories associated with different themes of the site.

## Hudson’s Bay Company Industries and Trade

<b>Object Name:</b>	<b>Catalog #:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Trade Ax	2230	Cabinet 14 Drawer 12
Toy Trade Ax	28308	Cabinet 60 Drawer 9
Trade Awl	14651	Cabinet 54 Drawer 10
Steel Projectile Point	125364	Cabinet 45 Drawer 4
North West Company Token	117373	Cabinet B Drawer 1
Haida Argillite Tobacco Pipe	11212	Cabinet 35 Drawer 10
Bale Seals	125373; 18378, 18380	Cabinet 45 Drawer 4; Cabinet 51 Drawer 9
Perforated Thimble	15246-15248	Cabinet 56 Drawer 4
Tobacco	119530	Box #488
Trade Beads	Type Collection	Cabinet 22 Drawers 1-4
Flintlock Sideplate	15967	Cabinet 57 Drawer 12
Beaver Trap (a complete trap may be reconstructed from these parts)	30639, 1586; 44968, 44613; 46190; 1944; 30615; 37696; 41931; 1996	Cabinet 15 Drawer 14; Cabinet 34 Drawer 2; Cabinet 36 Drawer 9; Cabinet 15 Drawer 13; Cabinet 15 Drawer 8; Cabinet 32 Drawer 7; Cabinet 38 Drawer 14; Cabinet 15 Drawer 10
Scale Weight	20011	Cabinet 61 Drawer 5
Blacksmith Punch	45949	Cabinet 36 Drawer 8
Woodworking Chisel	117362	Cabinet 64 Drawer 15

## Domestic Life in the Fort and Village

<b>Object Name:</b>	<b>Catalog #:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Saucer with Mulberry Transferprint	36399	Cabinet 1 Drawer 3
Jug with Blue Transferprint	659	Cabinet 2 Drawer 5



Chinese Ginger Jar	2135, 60	Cabinet 7 Drawer 2
Incised Slate Tablet	17100; 1710-1711	Cabinet 59 Drawer 6; Cabinet 12 Drawer 6
Engraved Silver Thimble	279	Cabinet 11 Drawer 10
Rosary	10362	Cabinet 43 Drawer 5
Crucifix	125366	Cabinet 45 Drawer 4
Tortoiseshell Hair Comb	9880	Cabinet 42 Drawer 3
Ring with Glass "Stone"	30382	Cabinet 11 Drawer 10
Set of Polychrome Ware	21421-21504	Cabinet 46 Drawers 14 and 15
Engraved Tumbler	9805	Cabinet 41 Drawer 4
Crock with Residue	94681, 94684, 94659, 117567	Cabinet 39 Drawer 10
Toothpick	682	Cabinet 11 Drawer 10
Carved Bone Ladles	521-522	Cabinet 12 Drawer 7
Dominoes	15241-15242	Cabinet 56 Drawer 4
Incised Tooth Gaming Piece	360	Cabinet 12 Drawer 7
Toothpaste Jar	233	Cabinet 8 Drawer 9
Vomit Pot	661	Cabinet 6 Drawer 9
Chamberpot (possibly from the Charles Wilkes expedition)	636	O.O. Howard House
Apothecary Bottles	9769-9770, 9772- 9773	Cabinet 41 Drawer 7
Whale Oil Lamp	52	Cabinet 11 Drawer 5
Case Lock	1732	Cabinet 14 Drawer 7

## The Fort Vancouver Farm

Object Name:	Catalog #:	Location:
Scythe	487	Cabinet 15 Drawer 2
Sickle	18461	Cabinet 53 Drawer 6
Chinese Porcelain Flowerpot	63	Cabinet 7 Drawer 2
Common Pottery Flowerpot	114540	Cabinet 29 Drawer 2
Seeds	49821; 89158	Cabinet 43 Drawer 5; Box #108
Whetstone	488	Cabinet 12 Drawer 6
Hoe Blade	17628	Cabinet 54 Drawer 4
Plowshare	20294	Stack 4 Shelf 5
Muleshoe	30000	Cabinet 13 Drawer 5
Horseshoe	30713	Cabinet 13 Drawer 3

## Historic Structures and Architecture

<b>Object Name:</b>	<b>Catalog #:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Fur Store Flooring with Tar	108037; 108209	Box #374; Can #377
Stockade Post	1976	Cabinet 12 Drawer 8
Sill from Northwest Bastion	123328	Cabinet 30 Drawer 12
Brick	Type Collection	Stack 6 Shelves 3-6
Painted Bricks	100950; 100995; 102937; 102982; 103360	Can #305; Can #303; Can #322; Can #324; Can #328
Painted Wood	90528; 101897	Box #131; Box #314
Fill Sample from Bachelors' Quarters	124578	Can #569
Building Hardware	Caywood collection	Cabinet 14 Drawers 3-8
Shutter Dog	11007	Cabinet 36 Drawer 5
Door Latch Keeper	117421	Cabinet 36 Drawer 5
Strap Hinge	11403	Cabinet 38 Drawer 3
Door Handles	10998, 47469	Cabinet 36 Drawer 5

## The US Army and Early Military Life

<b>Object Name:</b>	<b>Catalog #:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Grenade	117370	Cabinet 64 Drawer 15
Scabbard	2423	Cabinet 12 Drawer 13
Pistol	2421	Cabinet 12 Drawer 13
Cartridges	510	Cabinet 14 Drawer 8
Bullet	9493	Cabinet 31 Drawer 11
Insignia	382	Cabinet 12 Drawer 3
Bridle Insignia	9501	Cabinet 31 Drawer 11
Japanese Teapot	21896	Cabinet 48 Drawer 3
Chinese Import Plate	21889	Cabinet 48 Drawer 4
Quarter Master's Depot Issue Ceramics	123229	Box #546
Quarter Master's Depot Issue Teaspoon	79806	Box #45
Plaster Rosette	79853	Cabinet 57 Drawer 4
Jack	21990	Cabinet 51 Drawer 9
Dolls	21668-21669; 21894-21895	Cabinet 48 Drawer 2; Cabinet 48 Drawer 3
Garter Belt Buckle	15224	Cabinet 56 Drawer 4
Coffee Beans	126837	Box #1

# Bibliography of Pertinent References

Each of the references listed below is available at Fort Vancouver, either in the curatorial facility or the library. Curatorial and archival reference materials may not be removed from the Fur Store building, but they are available for your use after approval by the Curator or Museum Technician. Only staff and volunteers may check out books and other reference materials, but you are welcome to use the site's library during normal working hours. For more information on library policies, please see the bulletin board outside the library door or call (360) 696-7659 \*18. This is not an exhaustive list, as new reference materials are acquired on a continual basis. Also, many reference books exist in the private collections of staff members; please ask if you have a specific area of interest.

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## West Collection Storage Room



